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MEMOIR OF JEAN BAPTISTE FARIBAULT.

BY GEN. H. H. SIBLEY.

Bartholomew Faribault, the father of the subject of this memoir, was born in Paris, France. He was by profession a lawyer, and he was so prominent, that he received from the government the important appointment of Military Secretary to the French army in Canada, then under the command of Montcalm. He came to Canada, entered upon his duties, and continued to discharge them until the 12th September, 1759, the day which witnessed the defeat of the French under the walls of Quebec, by the British forces commanded by the gallant General Wolfe, who with his heroic antagonist Montcalm, fell in the action.

Mr. Faribault thereafter retired to private life at Berthier, Canada. He held the office of Notary Public until the close of his life, in 1801. He died universally respected in the community. His son, Jean Baptiste, was born at Berthier in 1774, being one of a family of ten children, of whom only four attained mature age. He attended school until sixteen years old, when he was engaged as clerk by a merchant named Thurseau, living in Quebec, with whom he remained two years. He then was employed by the firm of McNides & Company, importers, in the same city. He continued in their service for a term of six years. Although treated by his employers with great kindness and consideration, young Faribault was of too restive and adventurous a disposition to be contented longer with the monotony of a residence in town. It was only by the combined influence and persuasion of his kindred and friends, that he was prevented from encountering the hardships and dangers of a sailor's life, for which he had early manifested a decided inclination. While thus thwarted, and still uncertain

as to his future mode of life, an incident occurred which but for the strong remonstrances of his friends, would have resulted in his entering upon a military career. Prince EDWARD of England, and his brother Prince WILLIAM HENRY were in Canada, the former in command of a favorite regiment. FARIBAULT witnessed the manœuvres of this fine body of men, and was so much struck by the brilliancy of the display, that he proceeded to place on canvass a very creditable picture of the regiment and its officers, albeit he had never received any instruction in painting. The production was shown to Prince EDWARD, who was pleased with it, so much so indeed, that he proffered to the young artist a commission as junior officer in his regiment. FARIBAULT declined the honor, but requested the Prince to bestow the commission upon a fellow clerk named DE SALSBURY, which was done, and the appointee joined the regiment accordingly, and subsequently became a prominent and distinguished officer in the British service during the war of 1812–14.

Shortly after this episode, the Northwest Fur Company, whose operations embraced a large portion of the Northwest, desired to secure the services of three or four young and enterprising men to act as traders among the Indians. In spite of the opposition of his family, young FARIBAULT, carried away by the romance and adventure of a life among the savages in a remote part of the country, offered himself, and was accepted. He, with three other young men, were dispatched, under the charge of two agents of the Company, in May, 1798, to their several fields of labor. They proceeded to Montreal, thence from the head of the rapids on Grand river they wended their long and weary way in what was termed a light canoe, composed of birch bark, to the distant island of Michilimackinac, now called Mackinac. The fare of the travelers was not by any means luxurious, being composed principally of salt pork, hard bread and biscuit, while the laboring portion of the crew had to content themselves with hulled corn, seasoned with a small amount of tallow. There were many portages, so called, on the route, where, in consequence of rapids, or other obstructions to navigation, it was necessary to transport the canoe, provisions and baggage sometimes for miles on the

shoulders of the men. After a long and tedious voyage of fifteen days the island of Mackinac was reached, much to the joy of the wearied adventurers.

The station or trading post to which young FARIBAULT was assigned was that of Kankakee, on the river of that name, not very far from the present site of the city of Chicago. That region being under the jurisdiction of the United States, it was a necessary preliminary that a license to trade be obtained from the proper authorities. To obtain this document, FARIBAULT was dispatched, under the guidance of a Potawattomie Indian, to Port Vincent, on the Wabash river, where Governor HARRISON, of the Northwestern Territory, Acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was stationed. A ride of six days with a guide with whom it was not possible to interchange a single intelligible sentence, could not prove, by any means, to be either profitable or interesting. On his arrival at Port Vincent, he was kindly received by Governor HARRISON, hospitably entertained at the Governor's residence for three or four days, when, armed with the proper authorization, he departed for the post of duty assigned to him at Kankakee. On his way, he remained over night at the trading house of one MCKENZIE, at the mouth of the St. Joseph's river, where the four men or voyageurs, who had been dispatched to join him, were expected to be found. Unfortunately, one of these four had fallen sick and died in the interim, so that FARIBAULT was compelled to proceed to his station with but three men, upon whom was devolved the labor of erecting buildings and other adjuncts for a regular trading post. No wise discouraged, Mr. FARIBAULT arrived at the mouth of the Kankakee, the goods and merchandise followed soon afterwards, and while the men occupied themselves with the construction of winter quarters, he opened a brisk and successful trade with the Potawattomie Indians.

Mackinac and Drummond's Island were at that time the depots of the trade of the Northwest Fur Company. Mr. FARIBAULT proceeded in the spring with his men, and the furs and peltries collected during the winter, to the first named post, where he delivered his valuable returns to the duly authorized agent of the Company, Mr. GILLESPIE.

Mr. FARIBAULT had displayed so much business tact during

the first winter's operations, that Mr. GILLESPIE, with his consent, assigned him to the charge of a more important post on the Des Moines river, about two hundred miles above its mouth, on the west side of the Mississippi river. The post was named Redwood, and the Indians with whom he was to trade were the Dakota or Sioux, speaking a language entirely different from that of the Potawattomies—the latter being a branch of and speaking the dialect of the great Algonquin or Ojibwa stock. Consequently he required the aid of an interpreter, and a man named DEBAN was designated for that position. He was old, having lived many years among the Yankton Sioux, and was well acquainted with their character and their language. With his aid a successful trade was carried on with the savages, and Mr. FARIBAULT, the following spring, according to the instructions he had received, wended his way with the furs he had collected to the mouth of the Des Moines river, and delivered them to Mr. CRAWFORD, one of the accredited agents of the Company. Mr. FARIBAULT was continued four years in the charge of the same trading post. During this long period he saw no white man but his own assistants, except on his annual tour to the mouth of the river. The region where he was stationed abounded with beaver, otter, deer, bear, and other wild animals, and was the favorite resort of the Sioux bands, of the Sacs and Foxes, the Iowas, and other tribes, with whom the Sioux were on amicable terms.

The wages of a good clerk at that time was $200 per annum; interpreter $150, and common laborers or voyageurs $100, and the rations allowed them were of the simplest description. But the abundance of game more than compensated for any deficiency in food. The articles used in the trade with the Indians were principally blankets, cloths, calicoes, tobacco and cheap jewelry, including wampum, which latter served in lieu of money, as a basis of exchange. During the winter the traders and their men ensconced themselves in their warm log cabins, but in the early spring it was required of them to visit the various Indian camps to secure the furs and peltries collected by the savages in their hunts. Goods were not then given on credit, but everything was paid for on delivery. While employed at the post on the Des Moines, Mr. FARIBAULT

narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of a half-breed, who was jealous of the intrusion of a white man into this favored land.

Having served the term for which he had been engaged, he returned to Mackinac, with the intention of going back to Canada, but having learned of the sudden death of both his parents within fifteen days of each other, Mr. FARIBAULT again entered the service of his former employers, and was dispatched to the river St. Peter's, now the Minnesota river, and took charge of the post at Little Rapids, about forty miles above its mouth. The band of Sioux Indians with whom he traded were named *Wak-pay ton*, or the "People of the Leaf." A man by the name of LAPOINTE was assigned him as interpreter. During the winter of 1804–5, Mr. FARIBAULT made the acquaintance of a trader named CAMPBELL, whose trading station was about fifteen miles below Little Rapids. Mr. CAMPBELL was an independent trader, and had two clerks in his employ, both of whom were subsequently killed by an Indian, whose daughter was the wife of one of them. This woman was not of good character, and having been reprimanded for her bad conduct by her husband, a Canadian Frenchman, named DECOTEAUX, her father incontinently disposed of his son-in-law by shooting him, and he also shot the other clerk, who was the only witness of the murder, with a hope of escaping detection and punishment. Mr. CAMPBELL boldly accused the savage of being the perpetrator of the double crime, whereupon the Indian determined to serve him as he had served the clerks. He summoned to his aid some of his kindred, and repaired to CAMPBELL'S house, where Mr. FARIBAULT happened to be at the time. CAMPBELL barred his doors, and, with the assistance of his friend and hired men, prepared to defend himself. The Indian mounted upon the roof of the cabin, and was peering down the chimney, when he received a ball through the jaw from a rifle in the hands of CAMPBELL, which felled him to the ground; another of the savages was shot through the nose, when the besiegers decamped, more than satisfied with their experience. Both CAMPBELL and FARIBAULT were deterred from venturing abroad for some days, lest they should be assassinated by some concealed Indian.

During the third year of his residence at Little Rapids, Mr. Faribault married a widow, the daughter of a Mr. Hanse, who had been previously Superintendent of Indian Affairs. At the time of their marriage the groom was in his 31st and the bride in her 22d year. This event precluded any idea of Mr. F.'s return to Canada. He was thenceforth permanently established as a denizen of the remote Northwest.

Mr. Faribault was soon called upon to deplore the untimely death of his friend Campbell, which occurred in this wise. Mr. Campbell, as has been stated, was an independent trader in opposition to the Northwest Fur Company, and the antagonism in this, as well as in many similar instances, degenerated into bitter personalities. One Crawford, a brother of the agent heretofore mentioned, took up the quarrel of the Company against Campbell, and challenged him to mortal combat. Campbell was a brave man, of fine physique, while his adversary was decrepid, and withal by no means otherwise the equal of Campbell in the public estimation. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, who represented the disparity in the standing of the two men, Campbell accepted the challenge, and the parties with their respective friends, proceeded to Mackinac and thence to a small island at the mouth of the river St. Mary's, near Drummond's Island, where the duel took place. Campbell was shot dead at the first fire, and Crawford was slightly wounded. The descendants of the two combatants do not seem to have continued the feud, inasmuch as Mr. Crawford's grandson, La Chapelle, is married to Mr. Campbell's grand-daughter, and is now a resident of Wabasha in this State.

Mr. Faribault was at Mackinac when he received the intelligence of the death of his friend Campbell, and it shocked him exceedingly, as a strong attachment had existed between them. On his return to the upper Mississippi, he was agreeably surprised when he had reached Prairie du Chien, where he had left his wife with her friends, to find that a boy had been born to them during his absence. This first-born is still living in the person of Mr. Alexander Faribault, the founder, and still a highly respected citizen, of Faribault, in Rice county, in this State.

In the fall of 1808, Mr. F. having ascertained that the Sioux bands at Little Rapids had decided to make war upon the Chippewas, instead of hunting as usual, concluded that it would be more profitable to pass the winter among his old friends the Yankton Sioux, on the Des Moines river. He incurred very great danger on his way to the post, with his voyageurs and goods, from the Iowa tribe of Indians, who being without a trader, endeavored to force Mr. F. to remain with them. Upon his refusal to do so, they threatened to kill him and appropriate his merchandise, and he was only rescued from the dilemma by the appearance of a large party of Yanktons, who escorted him in safety to his station. He was quite successful in his trading venture, and in the spring he made his way with his returns of furs and skins to Mackinac, the great depot of the Indian trade.

Mr. F., after ten years' connection with the Northwest Company, in the capacity of agent and trader, resolved to begin business on his own account at Prairie du Chien, which was then a mere hamlet containing a few families. He erected a suitable house, and commenced trading with the Winnebagoes, the Foxes and the Sioux of the Wak-pa-koota band, these several tribes being at peace with each other. He continued in this business for a number of years, and on one occasion received a dangerous wound in the side from the knife of a drunken Winnebago, to whom he had refused liquor. In addition to the regular trade with Indians, Mr. F. entered upon an exchange of goods for lead, with a Mr. Dubuque, at the point now occupied by the city of that name. The lead was taken to St. Louis in keel-boats, and sold there at a good profit. Fifteen days was considered a good average trip up the Mississippi from St. Louis to Prairie du Chien.

When the war of 1812 was declared, the British Government made great efforts to enlist the Indians of the Northwest against the Americans. Knowing the great influence wielded by the traders among these savages, commissions in the British army were tendered to each of them, and they were accepted by all but Messrs. Faribault and Provençalle, who declined to take any part against the American Government. The subject of this memoir was consequently arrested by a

Col. McCall, of the British militia service, and held as a prisoner on a gunboat, commanded by a Capt. Henderson, on board of which were two hundred men, en route to Prairie du Chien to dislodge the Americans. He was ordered to take his turn at the oar, but absolutely refused, saying he was a gentleman, and not accustomed to that kind of labor. Capt. Henderson reported him to Col. McCall for disobedience, but the latter, admiring his pluck, not only did not punish him, but received him on board his own boat, and treated him with courtesy and kindness.

The combined force of militia and Indians, upon their arrival at Prairie du Chien, made preparations to attack the American post. The families on the outside of the fort abandoned their homes, some of them taking refuge within the stockade, and others, Mrs. Faribault among the number, ascended the river in canoes to what is now called Winona. Mrs. F. supposed her husband to have proceeded to Mackinac, and had no idea that he was a prisoner in the hands of the attacking party. A bombardment was opened on the fort, and on the third day the Americans surrendered to greatly superior numbers. Meantime the deserted habitations were robbed of all their contents by the savages, and Mr. F., in addition to the losses thus sustained, received the unwelcome intelligence that lead belonging to him of the value of $3,000, which he had left in charge of Dubuque at his trading station, had been taken possession of by the hostile Indians, and been distributed among them.

After the surrender of Prairie du Chien, that post was garrisoned by 200 British regulars. Mr. F. was released on parole, and repaired to his former home, but the buildings had been burnt with their contents by the savages, and his stock of horses and cattle either run off or destroyed. He was thus left almost penniless, but, with his usual energy, he set himself industriously to work to retrieve his shattered fortune. The band of Sioux with whom Mrs. F. had taken refuge had remained neutral during the war, and they manifested their warm friendship for the old trader by bringing him game in abundance, and all the furs and skins they could collect from their hunts.

When peace was proclaimed, Col. Bolger, the British com-

mander of the post at Prairie du Chien, withdrew his forces after having destroyed the buildings and stockade, and proceeded to Mackinac. The following spring a detachment of American riflemen under Col. CHAMBERS rebuilt and garrisoned the fort. Mr. FARIBAULT in due form declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and a militia company having been organized, he received the appointment of First Lieutenant. The Northwest Fur Company not being permitted to continue their business upon American territory, sold out their interests to the American Fur Company, of which JOHN JACOB ASTOR was the head. JOSEPH ROLETTE was constituted the Agent of the newly-formed association in the Northwest, and Mr. FARIBAULT made arrangements with him for a supply of such merchandise as was requisite for his trade. He continued at Prairie du Chien for a period of three years, and was quite successful in business. At the end of that time he removed his trading station to Pike's Island, near the present Fort Snelling. This was done at the suggestion of Col. LEAVENWORTH, who was en route up the Mississippi to establish a military post at or near the junction of that river with the St. Peters, now Minnesota. Having fallen in with Mr. FARIBAULT at Prairie du Chien, Col. LEAVENWORTH was much impressed with the intelligence and extensive knowledge of the Sioux Indians, their character and habits, displayed by that gentleman, and strongly urged him to accompany the command, promising that if he would locate near the contemplated post he should be guaranteed military protection and encouragement in his business. The trade at Prairie du Chien had diminished very much in consequence of the removal of the Indians to better hunting grounds, so that Mr. F. regarded the offer as highly advantageous, and he accepted it without hesitation. Leaving his family behind, he followed the troops to their destination the succeeding spring, and was provided with quarters by Col. LEAVENWORTH until he could erect suitable buildings for himself. In this he was materially aided by his military friends. Mr. F. in addition to his regular business, had a strong penchant for farming, which inclination he had a good opportunity to gratify on "Pike's Island," where his log cabins were situated. He soon had a goodly number of

acres under cultivation, and was favored with good crops, so that he and his family, who had rejoined him, were contented and happy for the space of two entire years. In June of the third year, there occurred a flood in the Mississippi, which covered the island and carried off or destroyed all his moveable property. Nowise discouraged, he crossed to the east bank of the river, and erected a dwelling and storehouse on a plateau which he deemed to be above high water mark. He was kindly assisted as before by the officers of the post, and was soon comfortably established once more. But the fates had more ill in store for him, for in 1826, four years later, the ice gorged above the fort to such an extent that the river rose many feet beyond the highest mark previously known, and when the barrier gave way under the enormous pressure, the torrent carried with it FARIBAULT'S buildings and their contents, and his stock of animals. It was indeed fortunate for him that he had received a friendly warning from Col. SNELLING, who had succeeded to the command of the post bearing his name, of the threatening condition of the river, and provided him with a Mackinac boat, by means of which he saved the lives of himself, his wife and children, and secured his valuable collection of furs and skins. No such flood as that of 1826 has ever occurred in this region, if the testimony of the oldest Indians, and of white men who had been fifty years in the country is to be credited.

Fort Snelling was commenced in 1819, and completed in 1824. The first barracks for the troops was constructed on the south bank of the Minnesota river, near the site of the present railroad bridge. Well founded apprehensions of high water caused the removal of these temporary quarters to Camp Coldwater, about a mile north of the present fort, which was occupied until Snelling was finished.

In the year 1821, Col. LEAVENWORTH called together the chiefs and head men of the Sioux bands, and procured from them a grant of land nine miles square at the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. In the same treaty was inserted an article by which the Indians donated "Pike's Island" to the wife and children of Mr. F., whose Indian appellation was "CHA-PAH-SIN-TAY," or the "Beaver's Tail."

Subsequent to the flood in 1826, by which Mr. F. suffered

so much, he removed to the spot now called Mendota, where he erected a dwelling, and his family lived there for many years, he himself passing the winters at the Little Rapids, where he had established a trading post. He narrowly escaped death in 1833 at his station, at the hands of a treacherous Sioux Indian, who became enraged because he could not procure some article he desired on credit, which Mr. FARIBAULT did not have in his store. Without saying a word, the savage drew his knife and stabbed Mr. F. in the back, under the shoulder blade, when leaving the knife sticking in the wound, he turned to make his escape, but would have been shot down by OLIVER, a son of the old gentleman, aged about fourteen years, had not the gun been seized by Indians standing by who were relatives of the intended murderer. The wound was a very serious one, the knife having penetrated the lungs, and a long time elapsed before Mr. F. was considered out of danger; but his vigorous constitution and temperate habits finally carried him safely through, and his health was restored. Mrs. FARIBAULT manifested her devotion to her husband by a walk during the night of thirty-five miles from Mendota to Little Rapids, so soon as she learned of the injury he had received, without any escort but that of a single Indian.

Mr. FARIBAULT was a warm Roman Catholic, and was liberal in his donations to the church. He gave a home in his house to the Rev. Father GAULTIER, the first regular Catholic missionary, who came to this region in 1840, and afforded him all the aid in his power in the arduous labors incident to the founding of a new mission. Father GAULTIER was succeeded by Rev. Father RAVOUX, now Vicar General of the diocese of St. Paul, and he also received from the subject of this memoir substantial and valuable assistance.

Mr. F. survived his wife and all but four children of a large family. There remain but three of this number living, ALEXANDER, already mentioned, EMILY, the wife of Major FOWLER late of the U. S. army, both of whom reside in Faribault, and DAVID, who lives on a farm on the Cheyenne river, within the limits of the Sioux reservation. The death of Mr. F. took place at his daughter's house in Faribault on the 20th day of August, 1860, he having attained the advanced age of eighty-

seven years. He closed his eyes upon things earthly, after witnessing the marvelous changes wrought by civilization in the region which had for so many years been his abiding place, sincerely mourned by a large circle of friends and acquaintances. Among the pioneers of Minnesota, there are none whose memory and whose name better deserve to be respected and perpetuated, than JEAN BAPTISTE FARIBAULT. *Requiescat in pace.*

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